

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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TAGS: PINT ELAB GH

SUB: STUDENTS AND LABOR AT U. OF GHANA

REF: ACCRA 0442

1. FRONT-PAGE STORY ON SHOOTING OF STUDENT AT LEGON APPEARED JANUARY 21 IN SMALL-CIRCULATION INDEPENDENT AFRICAN WORLD NEWSPAPER IN ACCRA. WHETHER OR NOT THIS FORCED GOG HAND IN GOING PUBLIC WITH STORY OF LABOR DEMONSTRATIONS AT UNIVERSITY, JANUARY 22 EDITIONS BOTH GOVERNMENT-OWNED PAPERS, GHANAIAI TIMES AND DAILY GRPAHIC, CARRIED FRONT-PAGE STORIES STATING GOG HAD ORDERED THOROUGH PROBE OF DISTURBANCES ON CAMPUS. GOG STATEMENT GAVE FACTUAL RESUME OF EVENTS, EXPRESSED REGRET AT ACCIDENTIAL DEATH OF STUDENT, NOTED PROTEST PETITIONS FROM STUDENTS AT ALL THREE GHANAIAI UNIVERSITIES AND SAID GOVERNMENT "SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING PROTEST NOTE OF STUDENT BODY." STORIES PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZED STUDENT NON-INVOLVEMENT IN DEMONSTRATIONS BY WORKERS PROTESTING DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION THEIR NEW WAGE SCALES.

2. REPORTS RECEIVED BY EMBASSY INDICATE STUDENT MEETINGS AT LEGON AND UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST ORDERLY AND SMALL-SCALE.

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CONTINUING ACTIVITIES OF STRIKING WORKERS AT LEGON CAMPUS ALSO

DISPERSED AND SMALL-SCALE; POLICE NOT IN EVIDENCE ON CAMPUS. EFFORTS TO GET WORKERS BACK TO WORK PENDING RESOLUTION THEIR WAGE STATUS CONTINUING. ONE REPORT INDICATES POLICE HAVE ARRESTED FIFTEEN LABOR DEMONSTRATORS FOR THEIR PART IN ROCK-THROWING IN INITIAL DEMONSTRATION, AND PLAN TO PUT THEM ON TRIAL. CLASSES STILL NOT MEETING AT LEGON; STUDENTS BEING GIVEN DAILY ALLOWANCE TO BUY MEALS OUTSIDE AS RESIDENTIAL CAFETERIAS NOT FUNCTIONING. UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS REPORT THIS EXPENSE IS HEAVY DRAIN ON UNIVERSITY FUNDS AND CANNOT CONTINUE LONG.

3. WE UNDERSTAND SHIPMENT OF BODY OF SUDANESE STUDENT MAY BE DELAYED UNTIL JANUARY 25, AS POST-MORTEM NOT YET COMPLETED. ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 782 FILES ACCRA-LAGOS-KHARTOUM ON SATURDAYS.

4. COMMENT: STUDENTS WE HAVE TALKED TO CLEARLY AFRAID OF CONSEQUENCES OF ANY CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT, AND UNEASILY AWARE THAT LACK OF RESTRAINT COULD RESULT IN CLOSURE UNIVERSITY. PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THEIR PRIMARY COMPLAINT WAS LACK OF PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY GOG AT EVENTS ON CAMPUS; EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE TODAY MAY SUFFICE TO MEET THAT CONCERN AND OFFICIAL INQUIRY WILL OFFER THEM OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER STATEMENTS THEIR CONCERN. BY PAST STANDARDS, GOG REACTION ADROIT AND RELATIVELY PROMPT; MAY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN DEFUSING POTENTIALLY SERIOUS SITUATION.
BLACK

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